

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

November 5, 2014

Creation of Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones

The California Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones (UAIZ) Act, which became effective on January 1, 2014, allows local jurisdictions with populations over 250,000 to offer a reduced tax incentive to private owners of vacant land who commit to long term commercial or non-commercial agricultural uses of their property. The City and County of San Francisco were the first jurisdictions in the State to implement the UAIZ program on July 29, 2014.

The establishment of a UAIZ program in Los Angeles County promises to transform vacant and privately owned land into urban agriculture nodes while reducing the incidences of blight and illegal dumping, creating local jobs through urban farming, and increasing food security and access to nutritious foods.

Eligible properties would be assessed based on the statewide average irrigated agricultural land rate, which in 2014 was \$12,500 per acre. This reduced assessment would result in meaningful property tax savings for the land owner, thereby making it economically feasible to lease their property for agricultural uses. In order to qualify for the UAIZ program, the land must be between 0.1 to 3 acres in size, must not have a subdivision or contain permanent dwellings, and have zoning codes that do not prohibit agricultural use. Currently, there are only 1,261 operating urban agriculture sites across Los Angeles County. The establishment of a UAIZ program could significantly increase the amount of land available for agricultural uses countywide.

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Cities throughout the region, including the City of Los Angeles, have already begun investigating the viability of adopting a local UAIZ program. However, adoption of a local program is contingent upon Los Angeles County establishing the countywide assessment program.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Acting Assessor, the Director of Regional Planning, and County Counsel to report back in writing to the Board of Supervisors within 90 days on the feasibility of implementing an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones program (Program). The report should include an assessment of the number of eligible properties in the County of Los Angeles, a recommended budget and schedule for potential implementation of the Program, and the anticipated impact on property tax revenue and the Countywide budget.

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